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## Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Arts Education Programs





# Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Arts Education Programs

The careful planning and implementation of comprehensive, standards-based visual and performing arts education programs are essential to success. (See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the guiding principles for such programs.) Topics discussed in this chapter are as follows:

- Planning and administering comprehensive, standards-based arts education programs
- Conducting arts education programs at three levels of schooling
- Partnering with the school library staff
- Promoting partnerships and collaborations
- Evaluating arts education programs
- Providing access for all students
- Applying new media and electronic technology

Teachers, artists who teach in the schools, and those who plan or develop local arts education programs will benefit from the content of this chapter because it includes all of the arts within the context of comprehensive visual and performing arts education programs. In addition, administrators, superintendents, principals, curriculum developers, and school board members will find the descriptions in this chapter helpful as they plan arts education programs for all students.

## Planning Arts Education Programs

Much of the success of educational programs hinges on how well counties, school districts, and schools collaborate, how much the parents are involved, and to what extent colleges, universities, and communities participate in designing and implementing the programs. All students benefit when the school district governing board, district administrators, school staff members, parents, and the community together acknowledge the arts as basic in education, value the arts, and consider each arts discipline in planning for facilities, resources, professional development, and assessment.

Establishing arts education programs in a school or school district requires examining existing site or district programs. In doing so, school or district administrators may want to consider using an assessment tool, such as the *Arts Education Program Toolkit*.<sup>1</sup> Developed by the Model Arts Program Network School Districts in collaboration with the California Department of Education, the toolkit provides a way for schools and school districts to determine what they have and what they need in their arts education programs. This self-study helps develop short- and long-term plans for the gradual implementation of a standards-based curriculum articulated through the grade levels.

The toolkit is but one example of many available self-evaluation and planning processes, each following similar steps. By using it, a district or school site can determine the implementation level of an arts program—foundation, building, or best practices—and identify the next steps to be taken. The use of the toolkit’s continuum generates conversation, stimulates research, builds consensus, enhances decision making, and supports planning. As each of the ten focus areas and criteria is discussed, issues arise about the elements valued in an arts education program for all students. In examining a school or district program, school or district administrators should consider the following areas (identified in the toolkit):

- Standards-based curriculum
- Instruction and methodology
- Student assessment
- Professional development for those implementing the arts education program
- Qualified teachers, personnel, and program administration
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Budgetary needs
- Facilities, logistics, and necessary resources
- Program evaluation
- Time and timing

## Administering Arts Education Programs

District-level administrators and staff, from superintendents to visual and performing arts coordinators and lead teachers, are key participants in implementing district policies for arts education programs. The first steps to be taken are to complete a self-study of the current arts education programs; gain the endorsement of a long-range plan by district, school, and community

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<sup>1</sup> *Arts Education Program Toolkit: A Visual and Performing Arts Assessment Process*. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2001.

stakeholders; and have the plan adopted by the school district governing board. The long-range plan should include the following elements:

- Allocating personnel and instructional resources, including appropriate materials, equipment, and facilities
- Ensuring that the district has a standards-based arts curriculum for kindergarten through grade eight and high school
- Developing collaboration to support the program with school district, community, state, and national resources
- Securing funding and grants for the arts education program within and outside the district

When educators analyze standards-based instruction, many discover that their classroom instruction already follows a standards-based approach. Students are engaged in meaningful work and the creative process, know what is expected of them, can describe what they are doing and why, demonstrate habits of rehearsal and revision, can discuss work in progress in terms of quality, describe what assistance they need, and see their teachers as advocates and coaches.

Implementing comprehensive arts education programs involves different levels of administration: school district, school site, and classroom levels.

### School District Level

In implementing a standards-based visual and performing arts curriculum, district administrators should consider:

- Short- and long-range plans (How well are arts programs being developed in the short term and over time at the school site and school district levels?)
- Teacher capacity (In what areas do teachers need professional development to teach a standards-based visual and performing arts curriculum?)
- Benchmarks for success in the arts for all students (How do we know students are gaining proficiency in the visual and performing arts standards?)
- Distribution of arts instruction across all grades (How do we implement standards-based arts instruction across the grade levels for all students?)
- Allocation of resources (What teachers, materials, equipment, books, electronic media, facilities, and community partnerships do we need?)

For further information see Appendix D, “Continuum for Implementing Arts Education Programs.”

### School Site Level

The roles of site administrators and school site councils are crucial to the planning and success of visual and performing arts programs at schools.

Although site administrators are not required to be arts experts, they must be advocates for the arts. Accordingly, they must know the content standards and understand the connection between the visual and performing arts standards and the five strands that connect instruction and content (see Chapter 1). Site administrators must work with school staff members, parents, and the community to set a plan in motion that includes broad-based representation and participation and ensures that all students receive a standards-based curriculum in the visual and performing arts.

In addition to establishing a collaborative planning and implementation process, site administrators must ensure that the arts are included in the basic education of all students by:

- Allowing enough time to teach the arts to all students and preparation time for those teaching the arts
- Providing appropriate facilities, necessary equipment, equipment repair, and materials
- Ensuring that subject-centered instruction and arts instruction relating art to other subjects are occurring in elementary school classrooms and that students have access to the arts through appropriate scheduling of teachers and students in subject-centered classes at the middle school and high school levels
- Allowing opportunities for teachers to meet across grade levels and subject areas for planning
- Advocating the importance of the arts for all students to parents and members of the community
- Providing opportunities for exhibitions and performances of works in progress and final products in schools and in the community as curricular and cocurricular educational experiences
- Providing opportunities for community artists and performers to collaborate with teachers in delivering a standards-based visual and performing arts curriculum to students in classrooms and in community museums, galleries, and performance venues
- Providing time for periodic evaluation of the arts education program at the school level

### Classroom Level

In implementing a comprehensive, standards-based visual and performing arts curriculum, teachers will:

- Design and conduct instructional activities aligned with the standards.
- Evaluate student work and make fair and credible judgments of quality.
- Manage data and plan instruction accordingly.



- Communicate specific expectations and provide explicit feedback to students.
- Use student feedback to improve arts instruction.
- Teach students to evaluate their own work.
- Be relentless in pursuit of improved performance.
- Understand the community's expectations for student performance.

## Conducting Arts Education Programs

The elements and benefits of high-quality, comprehensive, standards-based visual and performing arts programs implemented at the elementary school, middle school, and high school levels are described as follows. Expectations for teachers and students are included.

### Elementary School Level

Arts programs in the early grades provide essential first steps for students as they develop their ability to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and understanding concerning the world around them. Through the arts the students gain the knowledge and skills needed to express their ideas creatively in verbal and nonverbal ways. The programs should include performing and experiencing the arts as well as talking, reading, and writing about them. The delivery of programs to help students achieve the arts content standards may involve the collaboration of credentialed arts specialists, classroom teachers, professional artists, and other community resource persons to support standards-based arts experiences. For example, the classroom teacher, who knows the curriculum, can provide follow-up lessons after a visit by a guest artist or a community performance and can make connections, highlight relationships, and introduce applications as appropriate.

Teachers, knowledgeable about the artistic and aesthetic development of their students, should respect the students' self-expressions. They should include activities in the arts that relate to the interests of the students, such as artwork and performances initiated, designed, and completed by the students, and should balance student-initiated and teacher-directed activities. In addition, by having students read literature about the arts and artists that includes stories, biographies, and histories of dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts, the teacher helps the students understand the connections between the creative work they do and that done by others.

### Middle School Level

Exploration, an important part of a middle school arts program, should include all the requisites of the standards-based elementary-level program with essential additions. Courses in the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre,

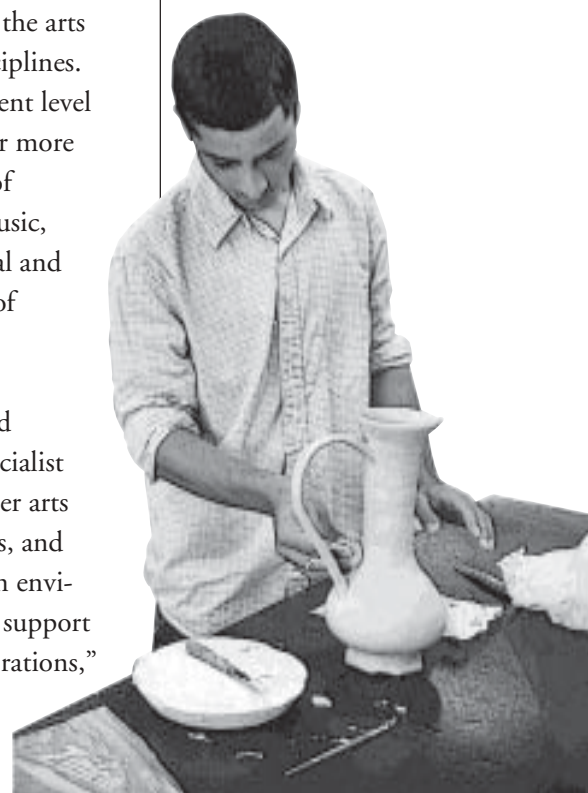
and the visual arts) are designed to increase and refine students' knowledge and skills beyond those learned at the elementary school level. Students may experience one or all four arts disciplines to expand their knowledge and skill and to make personal connections with the world, the school, and themselves. When students are taught by specialists in each discipline, they should continue their development in the five strands of each of those disciplines. Strategies for implementation may include a rotation or exploratory schedule for all students along with yearlong courses for students interested in more in-depth study in one or more of the arts.

In middle school arts specialist teachers should direct students to achieve the content standards within each discipline. School district and school administrators and faculty should collaborate with visiting artists and community arts resources to provide a comprehensive arts program for all students that is standards-based and relevant. Middle school students should begin to develop a firm foundation in the arts disciplines to be prepared for more focused study in one or more of the arts in high school. Accordingly, articulation needs to occur between the middle school and high school arts teachers.

### High School Level

High school arts programs should be based on an overall vision of secondary education. That is, they should engage every student in a rigorous, standards-based curriculum enabling the student to make the transition from high school to higher education and a career. During their high school years, students have the opportunity to continue with in-depth instruction in the arts by selecting standards-based courses in one or more of the four arts disciplines. After a one-year course, a student should reach the beginning or proficient level of achievement described in the arts content standards. And after two or more years in the same discipline, a student should reach the advanced level of achievement (see Chapter 3). Yearlong high school courses in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts should all be approved to meet the new visual and performing arts requirement for freshman admission to the University of California and the California State University (see Appendix B).

Through careful planning and allocation of resources, problems in scheduling and cooperative curriculum planning of subject-centered and arts-connected instruction can be accommodated. Credentialed arts specialist teachers should provide the instruction, and professional artists and other arts providers can serve as important resources. Student clubs, parent groups, and community resources all enhance the curriculum by helping to create an environment that encourages all students to develop an appreciation of and support for the arts. A later section, titled "Promoting Partnerships and Collaborations," in this chapter provides ideas on working with the arts community to ensure unified support for a successful arts program.





## Partnering with the School Library Staff

The school library serves as an integral partner in the delivery of the visual and performing arts curriculum. It should house a large shared collection of materials in various formats accessible to all students and staff and should provide assistance and support for the visual and performing arts instructional program.

The school library should provide a variety of resources for all students to help them talk, read, and write about the arts. Suggested examples would include biographies of people in the arts suitable to various reading levels, picture books that illustrate a variety of art genres, and circulating collections of art prints, audio CDs, rhythm instruments, videos that showcase artists in production, and fine art reproductions. Such materials provide students with hands-on experiences and background for artistic development and expression. In addition, plays, monologues, sheet music, art production software, specialized magazines, and online resources help middle and high school students to refine their knowledge and skills in the arts.

Because the school library is used by all students and staff and is often open to parents and the community, it provides an effective location for a variety of activities related to the arts. It can be a prime location for rotating displays of student artwork, often including ceramics, photography, and digital art projects. Further, puppet plays, skits, and storytelling that are a regular part of the school library program can be presented as a natural link to the dramatic arts. As with guest authors, illustrators of children's books can meet with groups of students in the library. In a middle school or high school, the school library can also be a venue for performances by a chamber music group, jazz band, or madrigal group.

The credentialed library media teacher should serve as a partner in instruction, technology applications, and use of resources, collaborating with classroom teachers and visual and performing arts specialists in providing enriching experiences for students in the arts. Research projects related to the arts should be designed and coordinated within this collaborative partnership, thus infusing rich resources and information literacy into the content areas.

## Promoting Partnerships and Collaborations

The collaborative nature of the arts should lead to partnerships between schools, school districts, county offices of education, the business community, professional artists, nonprofit and for-profit arts providers, parents with arts expertise, and parent volunteers. Such partnerships expand the capabilities of the school and bring students into direct contact with the arts and artists. Further, they satisfy the responsibility of arts organizations to the community, improve their educational function, and, by involving the participation of the

next generation, advance their interest in building audiences. Partnerships also allow the pooling of resources and ideas, the sharing of workloads, and the expansion of funding bases; strengthen political advocacy; and provide professional development. All partners should benefit from collaborations. For example, when a school is linked with a community performing arts group, performing artists may be permitted to rehearse in the school arts facilities and present performances in the auditorium. Visual artists may be offered the use of studio space.

Each school district should provide leadership and support for coordinating arts resources. For example, a district arts coordinator might develop community partnerships, write grants to fund special programs, and ensure that arts resources reach every school. A comprehensive, articulated program of arts education should incorporate the unique resources of the whole community. In California these resources may include administrators and teachers who understand the goals of arts education, individual artists in each discipline, arts providers, local arts agencies or councils, architects, public art, museums, special exhibitions, performing arts centers, theatres, performing companies, artist studios and cooperatives, clubs and societies, and businesses and industries that support the arts.

Often, dress-rehearsal performances of professional productions are made available to students at a reduced cost, and in some cities the musicians' union arranges programs for schools. Additionally, some community foundations specialize in providing funding and arts programs for schools. Business and industries with a connection to the arts and local and national foundations may provide guest speakers, job shadowing, professional development for teachers, grants, materials, and equipment. And service learning may provide students with the opportunity to build partnerships within and across the arts community. Implementing a standards-based arts curriculum within the context of filling a real need in the community enhances the meaning of the learning experience for students and fosters civic responsibility.

A school-level arts liaison might communicate with the community through a representative of the local arts council or individuals knowledgeable about arts facilities and performances in the area. Meetings between community representatives, arts chairpersons, and teachers of the arts should become routine so that an effective program of community arts experiences can be planned for the school—a program that is aligned with and supports a standards-based curriculum.

Local arts agencies can provide information about artists and performers available for guest appearances or as artists-in-residence. The agencies know about exhibitions or festivals opening in the region and performances scheduled in theatres and concert halls. Then arts chairpersons and faculties can decide which arts experiences should enhance standards-based student learning most effectively and deepen the impact of instruction.

Guest artists and artists-in-residence can be an important part of a school's visual and performing arts program. In addition, community resource persons, administrators, parents, arts chairpersons, and arts teachers can ensure that the program is well defined and efficiently run. For example, transportation should be made available for students to visit arts venues, artists should be scheduled for classroom visits, materials should be well organized, and facilities should be up to date and safe.

Joint planning may include a provision for including guest artists and artists-in-residence with the school's generalist and specialist teachers in professional development programs. Programs of this kind are mutually beneficial. That is, the teachers learn about current developments in art forms, and the guest artists and artists-in-residence learn how to adapt their teaching so that the students will gain standards-based knowledge and skills. Whenever possible, such professional development programs might also include school board members, administrators, other faculty, and parents.

Integrating community artists into a comprehensive, standards-based arts program brings the experiences of practicing artists to the students, who learn that artists struggle continually to solve problems, improve their skills, focus on meaning, and communicate effectively in their art form. Thus, students begin to see themselves as members of a community of artists who inherit long-standing traditions across time and place.

## Evaluating Arts Education Programs

Once a school district has adopted a policy on arts education and has begun to implement a long-range plan for arts education, it should consider ongoing program evaluation. The program should be reviewed continually to identify areas needing improvement. After students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members have submitted their comments on the proposed evaluation, it should be revised and expanded, including providing a new timeline.

A structured, ongoing evaluation of the visual and performing arts education program and implementation plan should provide a general profile of what has been accomplished, what is still needed, and what would revitalize the program. An ongoing arts education committee can be effective in monitoring the implementation process and keeping the school board, the district superintendent, the school staff, and the community updated on progress.

A preliminary self-evaluation instrument may include questions designed to collect baseline data for comparing program results later. Such questions may include asking why the program has been effective and successful, what the contributing factors have been, which resources have been particularly effective, and what has been left undone.

In the revision and expansion of the arts education program and implementation plan, focus should be placed on what financial and human resources are

available to expand a program, what changes have occurred in the student demographics in the school or district that require program changes, and what kind of professional staff development is needed.

Answers to such questions provide information and data that drive long-term planning efforts. Therefore, because additional program goals and tasks may become evident, the cycle of planning, implementing, and evaluating begins again. As plans and objectives are accomplished, revised, and expanded, the focus should remain on providing a high-quality, standards-based education in the visual and performing arts for all students at each grade level.

## Providing Access for All Students

Visual and performing arts education should provide all students with opportunities to advance artistically and cognitively, develop self-expression and self-confidence, and experience accomplishment. Instruction in each of the arts disciplines provides experiences and avenues for student learning and ways to meet the needs of students with diverse learning styles and abilities. Because in the visual arts most production is individualized, different learning styles can be accommodated. And in the performing arts, the use of ensembles provides opportunities for students of varied ages and expertise to succeed and learn from each other. The use of a variety of teaching strategies (for example, separating students individually, in pairs, in small groups, and in large groups) provides opportunities for everyone to succeed. All students should be encouraged to participate in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts as performers and as members of the audience.

Arts instruction should be modified to encourage the successful participation of students with disabilities. The advent of theatre for the deaf, wheelchair dance, museum tours for the visually impaired, and access by touch to musical sounds makes the arts more accessible. Special education staff can collaborate with teachers to plan, suggest, and recommend modifications.

The following Web sites provide resources for addressing the needs of students with disabilities:

California Special Education Programs: A Composite of Laws Database.

*Education Code*, Part 30, "Other Related Laws," and *California Code of Regulations*, Title 5. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/selinks.asp>

Special Education Laws and Regulations Database. [http://eit.otan.dni.us/speced/laws\\_search/searchlaws.cfm](http://eit.otan.dni.us/speced/laws_search/searchlaws.cfm).

Appropriate accommodations can be made to challenge students who excel in the visual and performing arts. They should be provided with instruction and opportunities to enrich and extend their expertise. And they should have access to such special district offerings as the gifted and talented education and international baccalaureate programs, arts magnet schools, advanced placement classes, and districtwide or communitywide events or performances.

## Applying New Media and Electronic Technology

The computer is an amplifier. It can only make what you bring to it larger. If you come to new media, electronic arts, without a firm grounding in the foundations of your art, you'll miss art's major lessons that connect you with a long history of human endeavor in that realm. . . . Teach sculpture with clay first, and once students have clay under their fingernails, once they know you have to walk around a sculpture to experience it, they can start on 3D computer modeling, where you stand still and rotate the artwork. The difference may be subtle from the outside, but those who succeed are those who have breadth to go with their depth, who bring a solid knowledge of the traditional to their amazing work mixing technology and art.

—Randy Nelson, Dean, Pixar University, Pixar Animation Studios

New media and electronic technology extend the horizons of the arts in directions not yet imagined. In all disciplines artists have traditionally used and combined technologies to create and express ideas. The use of electronic media (digital video, animation, and photo software) juxtaposed with the use of traditional media (paper, paints, classroom tools) expands the boundaries of space and time. For today's artists new media are altering the direction and escalating the pace of exploration within and between arts disciplines. They have easy access to vast amounts of artistic media, materials, processes, and information about historical and contemporary artists. Through technological advances the means for creating, displaying, duplicating, enhancing, and communicating aesthetic ideas are provided to artists.

The development of a solid foundation in an arts discipline brings depth to the mixing of technology and art so that students can be bold and innovative in discovering themselves and the world around them. As equipment becomes more accessible, students have the opportunity to use technology to enhance their artistic skills and create more professional productions and performances. They can use technology to produce animation, analyze works of art, create graphic designs, design sets, develop choreography, computerize stage lighting and scenery, and compose, edit, mix, practice, and sequence music.

New media and electronic technology can be incorporated into lessons, presentations, and explorations in each of the arts disciplines and utilized to connect the arts with other curriculum areas. For example, videos of significant moments in world history or monologues based on important speeches produced in theatre classes can be shared in history–social science classes. And color theory learned through the use of computer software in the visual arts class can be applied to vocational courses, such as interior decoration, floral design, or fashion design. Creating works through electronic technology

requires a variety of life skills, such as planning and preparing, managing time, meeting deadlines, collaborating, and resolving conflicts.

When school districts and schools plan for improving and adding new media and electronic technology, the arts teachers should be included in the discussion. Infusing new media and electronic technology into the arts curriculum provides a great opportunity for building partnerships with business and industry, especially in California, the home of numerous computer and software companies, animation studios, and television and motion picture production centers. These companies may be resources for grants, equipment, software, educational materials, staff development, job shadowing, guest speakers, career education, and field trips. When creating partnerships, one must remember that partnering is a two-way process with benefits to all participants.

### Examples of Technology in the Arts

In some classrooms across California right now:

- Kindergarten students use electronic media as a tool and a delivery system by taking digital photos of works of art and downloading them into a digital slideshow for an electronic gallery. The slideshow itself may become a work of art.
- Digital photos of a third-grade mural project are uploaded to a school Web site and shared with the community and relatives across the country.
- Fourth graders create individual dance videos with the digital camera and short videos to share with other students.
- Middle school students create three-dimensional figures, using animation software and blueprint design to create clay sculptures.
- As part of their community service, high school students create digital or video film documentaries or docudramas to share an experience in theatre class with eighth-grade students.
- High school jazz ensemble students review the videotape of the past week's clinic with an adjudicator and learn how they can improve their technique and performance.
- Teachers and students visit visual and performing artists and return to the classroom with a videotaped interview and demonstration of a process to share with other students.

